

# ***NEWS RELEASE***

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***OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY  
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA  
San Diego, California***

***United States Attorney  
Karen P. Hewitt***

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***For Further Information, Contact: Media Liaison Debra Hartman at (619) 557-5275***

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***For Immediate Release***

**NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY** - January 31, 2008

United States Attorney Karen P. Hewitt announced the unsealing today of a 6-count indictment charging Esequiel Lopez and Armando Regalado-Naranjo with Conspiracy to Distribute Marijuana and charging Esequiel Lopez with multiple counts of Possession of Marijuana with Intent to Distribute. A federal grand jury sitting in San Diego handed up the indictment on November 30, 2007, which was then sealed until their arrests by agents from the United States Border Patrol and the Drug Enforcement Administration.

According to the indictment, Esequiel Lopez and Armando Regalado-Naranjo conspired with each other and with other co-conspirators to distribute over 1,000 kilograms of marijuana. The indictment further charges that Esequiel Lopez possessed marijuana with intent to distribute on multiple occasions during the time period between March 2005 and May 2007.

According to court records, the defendants were arrested on January 30, 2008, and arraigned today before Magistrate Judge Barbara L. Major. The Government has requested that both defendants be detained without bail until trial on the basis of risk of flight. A detention hearing has been set for Tuesday, February 5, 2008.

The arrests and the indictment are the culmination of a multi-year joint investigation by the Drug Enforcement Administration and the United States Border Patrol. United States Attorney Hewitt praised the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) for the coordinated team effort in the culmination of this investigation. The OCDETF program was created to consolidate and utilize all law enforcement resources in this country's battle against major drug trafficking.

**DEFENDANTS**

**Case Number: 07cr3245BEN**

Esequiel Lopez  
Armando Regalado-Naranjo

**SUMMARY OF CHARGES**

Count: 1

Charges: Conspiracy to Distribute Marijuana  
Title 21, United States Code, Sections 841(a)(1) and 846.  
Maximum Penalty: Life in prison and a \$4,000,0000 fine.

Count 2-6

Charges: Possession of Marijuana with Intent to Distribute  
Title 21, United States Code, Sections 841(a)(1).  
Maximum Penalty: 40 years in prison and a \$2,000,0000 fine (Counts 3, 4, 5, 6).  
Maximum Penalty: 20 years in prison and a \$1,000,0000 fine (Count 2).

**PARTICIPATING AGENCIES**

United States Border Patrol  
Drug Enforcement Administration  
San Diego County Sheriff's Department

**An indictment is not evidence that the defendants committed the crimes charged. The defendants are presumed innocent until the Government meets its burden in court of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.**